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WRL News

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WRL Moves On Iran Crisis

Almost immediately after the hostages had been seized in Teheran and the current Iranian-U.S.crisis began, WRL staff moved into action. First, staff issued an immediate statement giving the WRL position—this was the first clear statement from the peace movement and it helped give the tone to statements other groups adopted later. At almost the same time, Ann Davidon, WRL E.C. member in Philadelphia, had pulled together an excellent statement and got very good press coverage for it in Philadelphia.

Second, staff got a wide range of groups together on Thanksgiving weekend and because of this WRL initiative, a demonstration near the U.S. Mission was held on November 29. At the same time, WRL staff circulated a broad statement on Iran and secured a wide range of signers, including Dwight Macdonald, Grace Paley, Susan Sontag, Noam Chomsky, Cora Weiss, Ben Spock, William Sloane Coffin Jr., and others—this was carried in WIN. Finally, the Executive Committee organized a weekly vigil in the New York area and urged members elsewhere in the country to organize similar vigils. On the West Coast, WRL/West with its usual initiative issued a firm statement on Iran. From the beginning WRL has condemned the taking of hostages and called for their release—and also demanded an end of all steps toward military action against Iran, an awareness of the brutal and murderous nature of the Shah's regime and the American role in installing the Shah—and stressed the need for an international tribunal to take charge of the Iranian charges against the Shah.

WRL has also been deeply

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WRL Vigil In Greenwich Village (New York City) on December 12. Photo by Karl Bissinger.

Report on the Founding Conference of the U.S. Peace Council

by Ann Davidon

On November 9-11 the U.S. Peace Council had a founding conference. This is the U.S. section of the Soviet-oriented World Peace Council. Ann Davidson, member of WRL's Executive Committee, was sent as our official observer and this is her report.

The founding conference of the U.S. Peace Council was attended by over 500 people. There was a lot of enthusiasm, heightened by the presence of "freedom fighters" from Nicaragua, Zimbabwe, Cuba and Vietnam, all of whom spoke vigorously for the cause of liberation from capitalist imperialism. I do not recall that anyone mentioned communist expansionism or abrogations of human rights. Mike Myerson, in an otherwise intelligent and moving address to the plenary, spoke of the many conflicts in which the U.S. had engaged since World War II, and contrasted this with the fact that the Soviet Union had been "at peace" all those years. I wondered where Mike was when

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Anti-Klan Organizing

by Dannia Southerland

What happened on November 3 in Greensboro, N.C. is history now but, as with any historical event, the story is still evolving and subject to retrospection and analysis. Of particular interest to the left and especially the non-violent movement is how we have and will respond to the resurgence of racism and the new, menacing Klan and Nazi merger. The links between the terrorist threat from the right that the Greensboro incident demonstrated and America's racist reaction to the Iranian situation make this not only obvious but imperative.

When the Klan-Nazi caravan drove through the Worker's Viewpoint assembly and shot with target accuracy the leaders of the Communist Workers' Party it may have been unbelievable but it shouldn't have been unexpected. CWP (they have dropped WVO acronym after the shootings), a national maoist group, called the November 3 "Death to the Klan" rally as a challenge for the Klan and Nazi's to meet them in the streets. The CWP assumed that if they could show the Klan as cowardly they would have won "a people's victory." History has shown again the fallability of macho posturing but more importantly in terms of our future as a movement it has warned the non-violent against weakness or resignation in the face of such inevitable clashes between violent factions on the left and terrorists of the right. One point must not be obscured in a pacifist analysis though and that is that although the CWP may be culpable because of their provocative tactics they did not "get what they deserved" as the conservative and liberal press suggested. No one deserves violence done to them.

Reaction to the killings in Greensboro was mixed, grief and shock overwhelmed the left political community, fear and anger was the reaction of the people in Greensboro and the rest of North Carolina who only knew what the press told them—that it was a shoot out between left and right crazies in an innocent neighborhood. Response was varied and fragmented. There was response though, in spite of the grief, the insular and obstructionist attitude of the CWP, or the rampant police intimidation and red-baiting. The first public action was a silent, non-violent vigil held simultaneously in Raleigh, Durham and Chapel Hill (a tri-city area 40 miles east of Greensboro). The vigils were called by an ad-hoc coalition of groups and individuals including War Resister's -Southeast, People's Alliance, Feminist and Jewish support groups, among others. The coalition has grown into an ad hoc organization developing ongoing responses to racism and fascism in the south. Internal education, creating educational materials for other groups and working with a national network to call a national march in Greensboro on February 2, 1980 are some of the strategies of this organization.

Calling the march was part of the focus of the Southern Christian Leaderships along with the Southern Organizing Committee and the Interdemoninational Foundation for Community Organizing's conference on Racism and the Klan held in Atlanta December 14 and 15. Also out of the conference, for the express purpose of calling the march, came a unified coalition that includes the CWP, a welcome and encouraging development. The march is being called a peaceful, non-violent march to commemorate the Greensboro lunch--counter sit-ins in the beginning of the Civil Rights Movement and a protest against the rising tide of racism the Klan and Nazi's "United Racist Front" represent.

War Resister's League-Southeast, as part of the education task force of the North Carolina anti-racism coalition and also as an inhouse project is preparing a position paper on the Greensboro incident and all its implications. The paper will examine this new racism from a feminist and pacifist perspective.

Dannia Southerland is the new staff person for the WRL-Southeast office.

Children's Reading List

Once upon a time the WRL Literature committee decided to assemble an informal list of recommended reading for children.

We had asked for books for children that were neither sexist, racist, nor militarist. We wrote to WRLers, WIN readers, and the like. The result is a collection of over 200 titles.

Not every book is cited completely, and not every book is without flaws, but all come with positive recommendation from people who think a lot like you.

Order at 50¢ each, from WRL, 339 Lafayette Street, New York, NY 10012.

24 "Executed" at Demo Against Death Penalty

by Jim Peck

Twenty-four of us were "executed" in a mock electric chair Nov. 30. Our "Dead" bodies were then transported across the street and deposited on the steps of the Supreme Court. The occasion was called Florida Day, since the largest death row population is in that state.

Police thereupon announced over a bullhorn that anybody who didn't leave within five minutes would be arrested. Nobody left. So, after five minutes, the "dead" bodies were loaded into three paddywagons, taken to a police precinct and held overnight. Bail was set at $500 each, and though the sponsoring coalition committee had raised sufficient money to get all of us out, we refused bail.

The following day we were arraigned before a black judge, who released us in recognizance, though most of us were from out-of-town. Most of us pleaded guilty. We must return Feb. 1 for sentencing.

Because of the novel nature of the demo, it received publicity on all Washington radio and TV stations and in both local newspapers.

Jim Peck is editor of WRL News.

Mobilization For Survival Conference

by Larry Gara

The energy level was high and the vibrations good for the national conference of the Mobilization for Survival, which met in Louisville, Kentucky, December 7 to 9. More than 300 participants came from all over the country and several from outside the United States, including one from Canada and another from West Germany.

Since the MOBE grew out of a call first expressed by Norma Becker at a WRL National Conference, it was fitting that WRL was well represented. David McReynolds, Charlie King, Steve Summerford, Dannia Southerland, Larry Gara and Norma Becker all attended, and two tables featured WRL literature. Norma co-chaired the last and most stormy session and did an excellent job of allowing everyone who wished to speak to do so, yet keeping the meeting within reasonable time limits.

Music led by Charlie King, Ted Warmbrand, and Judy Gorman-Jacobs contributed much to the good feeling and sense of dedication to the struggle which permeated the larger sessions. Much of the music was participatory in nature and the response was good. All of this added an essential element to this very succussful gathering of activists.

Most of the speeches were short and to the point. The fact that immediate health problems kept the keynote speaker, Orville Kelly, President of the National Association of Atomic Victims, from attending the conference only served to impress those there with the urgency of his concern. Along with a summary of work done to date, Bob Moore provided an excellent outline of the opportunities and obstacles confronting the MOBE in the coming year. Phil Berrigan spoke of the religious and moral imperative to end the arms race and several other speakers emphasized the real possibility of doing this if we take advantage of opportunities now available to us.

The primary focus of the

The primary focus of the conference was on the workshops and caucuses rather than on the talks in the larger gathering. Issues workshops included: Arms is a Woman's Issue, Euro-Strategic Weapons, Bread and Butter Issues of Human Survival, and Uranium Mining on Native Lands. Skills workshops covered topics from Organizing Nonviolent Civil Disobedience, led by Phil Berrigan, to Organizing a Teach-In. Several unprogrammed workshops were added, including a large one led by David Dellinger on Iran which produced a statement later endorsed by the larger group in plenary session, and another on the Trident Campaign led by Kathy Kelly of Live Without Trident.

Regional caucuses considered all of the task force reports submitted prior to the conference and others handed in at the time of the meeting. Caucuses considered all of the task force reports submitted prior to the conference and others handed in at the time of the meeting. Caucuses then reported back to the entire conference and , finally, there was consideration of all proposals given caucus go ahead in the final plenary session. As always, the question was which of numerous important actions should get MOBE staff time, funding and energy. Among the projects given strong support were a national demonstration in Washington on April 26, nationally coordinated actions on Hiroshima Day, a hearing to dramatize the growing number of nuclear victims, and a Nuclear Disarmament Summer to include house-to-house canvassing, leafletting, house meetings, teaching and community forums, a media campaign and other actions. All was done openly with general agreement on most issues. The projects that were voted down were defeated overwhelmingly. The spirit was good and several people were heard to remark that they noted a wholly free and unmanipulated conference.

Finally, some impressions came through strongly. Such gatherings of activists from around the county work to recharge one's battery. This one was an important morale booster. It was especially good to see such a clear connection drawn between nuclear power and nuclear weapons was so clear as to be virtually noncontroversial. Although this connection is a basic feature of the national MOBE, it was good to see it so thoroughly endorsed by the people who work at the grassroots level.

It was also heartening to see such a strong emphasis on active nonviolence. Several groups called special attention to this and some of the implications for actions, approaches to the police and to the general impression our actions give. Those who attended the MOBE conference took their task as seriously as their message of survival would dictate, but they have a good sense of humor and they are determined to bring about the changes required for survival with means which are appropriate to their objectives. There is no other way, and with such people to work with we just might make it.

Larry Gara is a professor at Wilmington College and is on the WRL National Committee.

HOLD THESE DATES

March 28-30: Three Mile Island Anniversary actions.

April 11-14: Citizens' Hearings on Radiation Victims in Washington DC.

April 25-28: Coalition for a Non-Nuclear World—Activities in Washington, DC with parallel actions in the West. Lobby Day, Teach-In, March and Rally, Religious Service, and Nonviolent Civil Disobedience at the Dept. of Energy.

May: Conference for a Nuclear-Free Pacific in Hawaii.

Summer-Fall: Nuclear Disarmament Summer—grassroots campaign to highlight disarmament during the election period.

June 7: Midwest No Nukes demonstration in Chicago.

July 18-26: Black Hills Survival Gathering, South Dakota.

August 6-9: 35th Anniversary of Hiroshima-Nagasaki bombings—local activities.

Soviets Take Unilateral Action on Disarmament

by David McReynolds

Leonid Brezhnev, Soviet head of state, made an unusual speech on October 6 in East Berlin. The occasion was the observance of 30 years of Communist rule in the German Democratic Republic (East Germany). What was unusual was that Brezhnev, instead of the usual cliches about disarmament which are used interchangeably by the Popes, Presidents, and heads of Communist states, actually acted.

He announced the Soviet Union was withdrawing 20,000 troops and a thousand tanks from East Germany and was prepared to reduce the number of medium-range nuclear weapons deployed in Eastern Europe from their present level, but only, of course, in the event no additional medium range nuclear weapons are deployed in Western Europe."

The Russians had done what everyone always says they will not do—they took a unilateral step toward disarmament. And they offered , at the same time, to negotiate a unilateral reduction in the number of their nuclear weapons in East Europe. The U.S. —*and the NATO allies*—rejected the Soviet action on two grounds. First, it was too small to carry real weight. Second, it was a transparent effort to block the NATO plan to install 572 advanced U.S. nuclear missles in West Europe.

The position of the U.S.—*and the NATO allies*—is appalling in its stupidity. I underline "and the NATO allies" because there is sometimes an assumption that NATO is simply the tool of the United States. When NATO was formed it was indeed a tool of the U.S.—as the Warsaw Pact was a tool of the Soviet Union. But more than twenty years have seen massive changes. The German mark is powerful—the dollar is so fragile few Americans can afford long holidays in Europe. The American trading position is directly challenged by West Europe. The European governments often find it convenient to blame the U.S. for unpopular policies—they want to give the appearance that something as appalling as the neutron bomb was almost forced on them by the Americans. Actually it was West Germany which pressed hardest for

U.S./NATO REJECT STEP

the neutron bomb—and Carter who surprised the rest of the NATO alliance by refusing, at the last minute, to build the weapon.

From a military point of view West Europe has had a free ride for some time—the capitalist states of West Europe are as committed to the Cold War as the Americans (though less hysterical and more realistic in their evaluation of the Soviets)—but they are perfectly happy to have the U.S. bear an unfairly heavy share of the military bill. When Carter boosts the military budget, he points to the Russians as the reason. When West European nations increase defense spending, they point to pressure from Washington, D.C. It is important for Americans to understand that West Europe is a powerful economic force and entirely able to tell Washington to go to hell. And it is crucial for the Left in West Europe to realize their primary enemy is not Washington, D.C., but *their own governments.* The ability of London, Paris, Rome and Bonn to point to Washington is dangerous *because it excuses them from taking responsibility for their own actions.*

Returning now to the logical errors of the NATO response to Brezhnev. First, it is true the Soviet action was "small"—*but it was a real step*, and if the Western states were serious about disarmament they would have leaped to explore the implications of the Soviet initiative. Second, certainly Brezhnev's move was timed to block installation of the 572 deadly new medium range nuclear missiles—and so what? The military keeps telling us that each new medium weapon it gets is really only a "bargaining chip" that it will give away at the negotiating table—the moment the enemy sits down and

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A.J. Muste Memorial Institute

"There is no way to peace. Peace is the way."

This was one of A.J. Muste's favorite aphorisms, and one that was reflected in the variety of issues, organizations, and campaigns into which he threw himself with such remarkable dedicaton. The A.J. Muste Memorial Institute has sought over the years to similarly explore the many ways of nonviolent social change.

We have found our funding assistance has gone for feminist theater and postage, toward publishing collections of poetry and aiding shipments of books to communities at war. We've investigated Peace in the Middle East and oppression in our cities. Slide shows, pamphlets, conference scholarships, speaking tours: all have been aided by grants from the Institute.

The A.J. Muste Memorial Institute has, in turn, been aided by the generous community of people whose commitment to peace and social justice has made the Institute's operation not only possible, but successful. This has been a banner year for us.

This is the first full year that A.J.M.M.I. has owned and maintained the "Peace Pentagon" at 339 Lafayette. It's been a year in which we've established our own office and some of our own programs. We've begun to assemble material for an A.J. Muste Memorial Library, a project which will provide a pacifist study and research center accessible to scholars and activists. We've broadened our outreach, so that more of the people who aer doing the community work of social change know that we are available to help to the limits of our resources.

Thanks to those who helped make 1979 a year of growth and experimentation; and thanks in advance for your continued support in 1980.

Contributions to the A.J. Muste Memorial Institute are deductible. Send contributions or inquiries to A.J. Muste Memorial Institute, 339 Lafayette Street, New York, NY 10012 [212]533-4335.

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Hungary and Czechoslovakia felt the big stick of the Soviet Union.

Communist Party literature was everywhere, and though I was glad the CP no longer felt it necessary to take cover, and although I came open-minded to the possibility that this might be a new beginning of a true dialogue between the peace movement that supports no wars and the anti-U.S. peace movement that supports "liberation" wars and revolutions, I felt increasingly that the former was being given no real platform by the latter.

Saturday evening's program ended with an impassioned speech by Romesh Chandra, head of the World Peace Council, which brought everyone (except a few of us) to their feet for several rhythmic hand-clapping ovations. Romesh assured us in ringing tones that armed struggle for liberation is peace, and that the Soviet Union—"Yes, why not say it?"—was the world's leader for peace.

Following this I felt moved to write a statement presenting my—and I trust WRL's and other groups'—point of view, which I hoped to be able to read the following day in the final plenary. But I was told it could only be taken up after resolutions from the workshops were discussed. When I had to leave, not long before the end of the conference, it was clear there would be no time for my statement.

Statement to the Founding Conference of the U.S. Peace Council, Phila. Nov. 10-11, 1979

My name is Ann Davidon and I am an observer from the War Resisters League. It seems to me that a conference which is attempting to organize United States peace forces to help achieve world peace is not complete without some specific consideration of the question of means and ends—with particular reference to the pacifist position of nonviolent action for social change. This position is held by major longstanding peace groups such as the War Resisters League, the American Friends Service Committee, and the Fellowship of Reconciliation. Thie position is virtually mis-

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Prisoners Rights March

The largest prisoner rights march in recent midwest history was held in Chicago on November 3rd. 300-400 black, white and Latino demonstrators from all over the midwest grabbed the attention of Saturday shoppers in the downtown loop area as they chanted "Hey-hey—Ho-ho' Marion prison his to go" and "Stop Jim Thompson and the DOC—Pontiac Brothers must go free." Signs and banners reading "Close the Marion Control Unit," "Free the 31 Pontiac Brothers" and "End the Death Penalty" were sprinkled throughout the two and sometimes three-block-long line of marchers.

Marchers gather at Federal Building in Chicago.

Audrey Aronson Meyers, WRL National Committee member attacked U.S. Bureau of Prisons Director Norman Carlson for "implementing genocidal policies in control units like Marion's." "He calls it 'retribution and incapacitation' in his introduction to the 1978 Federal Prison manual. And that's exactly what the BOP is doing at Marion —incapacitating people and bringing harsh retribution on them." She urged the crowd to join the National Committee in Washington, D.C. "next spring, when we're going to take our protest right to the doorstep of the Bureau of Prisons.

IRS vs WRL

A year ago, the WRL was served with a lien seeking collection of nearly a thousand dollars of back taxes for one of its staff members, Ralph DiGia. The League, ever one to express its stated principles in terms of action, has chosen to decline to pay those taxes.

During the last year, WRL representatives have appeared in the Federal District Court in defense of our human and constitutional right to not have to be forced to contribute to acts that violate our fundamental commitment of conscience: the war machine and all that it continues to wreak. In September a legal brief in support of this position was filed in large part thanks to the help of Harrop Freeman, a distinguished pacifist legal scholar and the Center on Law and Pacifism.

The Center on Law and Pacifism is the one continuing resource in this country for those in pursuit of their conscience, who find that their personal commitment results in legal conflicts. The Center has its own small staff and modest, too modest, budget. To help encourage others to utilize what experience it has collected and to encourage others to help fill the need, the Center gives conferences and encourages the formation ofd support chapters, particularly in law schools.

Those interested in the work of the Center, which has served WRL so ably, may wish to subscribe to the Newsletter ($5/yr) and to send a contribution to help it continue its invaluable work.

Center on Law and Pacifism
300 West Apsley Street
Philadelphia, PA 19144

Subscribe to WIN—WIN is expanding coverage of movement issues, ideas and analysis. A new bi-weekly format of 36 pages offers increased coverage of the concerns of social change activists. New subscriptions are $15 a year WIN/503 Atlantic Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11217.

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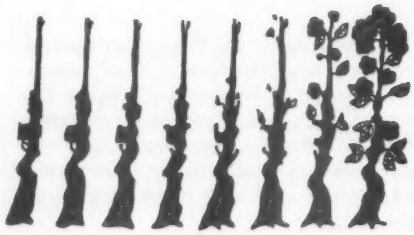
understood by both left and right political groups, and though I don't expect to be able to convince this gathering altogether, or even to clarify my position fully, I think it is essential to make some important distinctions and definitions.

We believe that injustice is not peace, but war also is not peace and perpetrates its own injustice. There are not good missiles and bad missiles, and armed struggle of any kind, even for the ideals of liberation and justice, is still war. It still kills people, and usually the little people. We believe it is possible to support the aims of social and economic justice and national self-determination without supporting armed struggle. It isn't easy to make this distinction, and those who take the position are often accused of not wanting to get their hands dirty, or of tacitly supporting the side of the oppressor. It is easy, of course, to tell others they should use nonviolent resistance rather than kill or maim people. But it is also eady for those who are safe in the United States or the Soviet Union to urge poor people in other countries to take up arms for liberation and justice, and to send them arms. It is the people in these poor countries who will get killed, not their armchair supporters.

Like wars of aggression and conquest, armed revolutions and wars of liberation also oppress and murder, which is the ultimate form of oppression. Most people throughout the world claim to hate war and love peace, but will justify murder for what they consider to be a just cause. Yet the use of guns, bombs, and missiles, regardless of the cause, has the same result: people are killed and maimed, or starve and are made refugees. To the extent that this occurs in a revolution, to that extent the new government that grows out of it tends to be repressive and unjust. We have seen many such revolutions. But to the extent that violence is minimal because there is genuine widespread support of the people, to that extent a new government is legitimate and less likely to be repressive. But once in power, every government, in my view, must be considered with healthy skepticism, for power that is not closely watched, readily questioned, and widely shared, inevitably corrupts those who hold it.

We can't pretend here that the Soviet Union, Vietnam, and other socialist states that have emerged from revolutions do not have their corruptions and repressions. We can't pretend that their armies and guns and bombs are good while those of the other side are bad. We can't justify Stalin and condemn Nixon, justify Soviet troops in Czechoslovakia and condemn US troops in Vietnam. Though these all may differ in degree and rationalization, we must recognize that these are repressive uses of power, and must not be supported. Just as socialist efforts take many forms, so do peace efforts. There is not just one monolithic peace movement whose leader is any particular government. Governments and people are all mixtures of good and bad—right sometimes and wrong at others. WE must struggle to maintain our independence of judgement and action, the ability to admit and try to rectify our mistakes, and the overriding concern for human beings as ends, not as means to other ends.



We may not all agree on how we—and especially how other more oppressed peoples—should struggle for justice, and we may well part company at various times. But what all of us can do now, pacifist and semi-pacifist and non-pacifist alike, is to unite in our nonviolent efforts here to prevent the oppression which is practiced or supported by our own government, our military, and our large corporations. It is in this country and on this government that we can have most influence, and by the example and effects of our nonviolent struggle against repression, exploitation and militarism in the United States, we can help minimize the violence used against, and by, those who are struggling for justice in other countries. The largely nonviolent struggle for civil rights in this country, Gandhi's nonviolent struggle in India, the nonviolent anti-nuclear struggle, and similar struggles for labor rights, civil liberties and other just causes, have inspired and been inspired by similar methods of struggle in many parts of the world. It is not just a technique for nice democracies.

Up to this century, people have seen their choices mainly in terms of acquiescing to oppression, or taking up arms against it to achieve goals of justice and liberation (and what struggle has not been accompanied by such noble rallying cries?). In today's world of weapons of mass annihiliation and incineration, which can be touched off by any small struggle anywhere, it is not just sweet unrealistic idealism to try to understand and develop nonviolent methods of struggle, it is an absolute necessity for survival, not just animal survival but survival with justice. Not just in the United States, but in every country. We believe that the struggle for peace and justice is an eternal one, but peace and justice do not lie in some pie-in-the-sky future, they lie within each of us and the way in which we live and struggle now.

Ann Davidon is a member of the WRL Executive Committee.

JIM PECK'S BOOK-UPDATED THROUGH 1979

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Weapons Facilities Task Force Conference

by Grace Hedemann

The Second National Weapons Facilities Task Force Conference was held November 2-4, 1979, in Washington, D.C. There were more than fifty participants from across the country representing some national, but mostly grass roots campaigns and organizations. They came from Live Without Trident, Y-12 Nuclear Weapons Conversion Group, Knolls Community Action Conversion Project, Hanford Conversion Project, U.C. Nuclear Labs Conversion Project, Bay State Conversion Group, and Nuclear Transportation Project, among others. Energy and interest were very high among participants. They came to share information and to develop local and national strategies in the areas of weapons production, arms, policy, economic conversion, and health/radiation.

Pam Solo and Mike Jendrzejczyk, convenors of the conference, developed an excellent format for presentations and discussions. Richard Barnet, Institute for Policy Studies, gave an overview on disarmament and weapons facilities organizing. Nina Gilden, staff for Representative Patricia Schroeder, reviewed weapons appropriations and how to influence the process. Bill Greenwood, International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, and Gail Daneker, Environmentalists for Full Employment, gave excellent information about working with labor. Bill Alvarez, Environmental Policy Center, pointed out the federalization of the commercial nuclear industry and the risks/consequences of radiation and health policies. Bill Hartung, Council of Economic Priorities, and Valerie Heinonen, Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibilities, discussed how to research and pressure corporations involved with the arms race. Representatives from SANE and the Coalition for a New Military and Foreign Policy reviewed upcoming pertinent legislation.

Participants in small special interest groups discussed priorities and campaign emphasis for the coming year. There are several exciting projects endorsed or initiated at the conference. The Citizens' Hearings for Radiation Victims, scheduled for April 11-14, 1980, in Washington, D.c., will be a forum for victims to relate their experiences in the nuclear industries, to seek medical compensation, and to call for a reduction of needless exposures. There is a wide range of sponsors for this project, including the War Resisters League. Disarmament Summer is another exciting project. The idea for the project came for the Vietnam Summer Projects of the 1960s. A lot of enthusiasm has been generated for the project—a mass canvassing from door-to-door during the 1980 summer on the issue of disarmament and the arms race. The details still have to be worked out on the campaigns emphasis (e.g., petition drive, town meetings, legislation, etc.). The project has been endorsed by the Mobilization for Survival, but will be an independent project sponsored by a wide coalition of organizations.

The conference was a huge success. Many ideas were generated and shared. The Third National Weapons Facilities Task Force Conference will be held in the Pacific Northwest during the summer of 1980.

The Nuclear Weapons Facilities Task Force is an outgrowth of the Mobilization for Survival task force. During early 1979, the group became an independent network of organizations and campaigns.

Grace Hedemann is on the WRL National Staff

German Pacifist Leader Dies

We regret to report that Helmut Michael Vogel, 57, died of cancer on October 17. He had for many years been a vigorous leader in the German pacifist movement, a voice for unity of the various groupings within the German Federal Republic, and of reconciliation between East and West. His death will be felt keenly by our coworkers in Germany.

WRL NEWS

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WRL is the U.S. branch of the War Resisters' International, a pacifist organization with affiliates in 20 countries and individuals in more than 80 countries.

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Staff: Karl Bissinger
Ralph DiGia
Ed Hedemann
Grace Hedemann
David McReynolds

WRL News (from 1967 on) is available on microfilm from University Microfilms International, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106.

Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan

Most of *WRL News* had gone to press when news reached us of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The WRL Executive Committee has cabled its protest to Moscow and we hope by the next issue of WRL News to have an analysis of the new "socialist wars" involving the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia, the Chinese invasion of Vietnam, and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. However the current Soviet action in Afghanistan does not detract from the importance of the unilateral disarmament action they have taken in Europe.

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disturbed at the wave of racist feeling directed against Iranians in this country. The crisis has brought out the worst in the American character, with Iranian students being threatened with deporation and in some cases Iranian workers being fired. There is one important lesson in the present crisis—the holding of innocent hostages by students angry at U.S. policy reminds us that the political and military leaders of the major powers hold as hostage every innocent child on the planet.

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negotiates. But, damn it, the Russians try to negotiate, they actually make unilateral cuts, and it turns out our military (and the NATO MILITARY) have become so fascinated with the "bargaining chips" that they don't want to negotiate at all.

What is appalling about the current situation is that the introduction of the missile systems is turning the NATO/Warsaw Pact confrontation away from a system of "vertical oppression" to one of "horizontal confrontation." By "vertical oppression" I mean that NATO has never really threatened the Warsaw Pact—but it has been considered the final club by which to knock in line any *Western* nation that might have "gone communist." (Note please that NATO never considered taking action against the Fascist governments of Spain or Portugal, but seriously considered action at the time when it seemed the Portugese Communist Party might come to power through a coup.) In the same way, the Warsaw Pact has never threatened the West—but it has been most helpful in maintaining top-down control of East Europe (i.e., the Warsaw Pact invasions of Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968).

But the new generation of military equipment is part of the Soviet/American hope that a nuclear war could be contained and fought in Europe. (This is, in fairness, more an American than a Soviet hipe—the Soviets have been fairly clear that if the West uses tactical weapons, the Soviets will use strategic weapons, and if NATO "nukes Warsaw", the Warsaw Pact will take out Washington and New York—not just London or Paris).

What goes on in the brains of the political leaders of Europe that they permit the Americans—and to some extent the Soviets—to "war game" Europe? The logic would be for the Left (and even the political conservatives) in Europe to create a strong neutral zone, and move toward the dissolution of *both* the Warsaw and NATO alliances. In a sense, the French and Germans and Poles and Hungarians should unite and say "if the Russians and Americans want to fight each other, fine—but not on our territory." NATO, incredibly, has taken a step toward saying "If there is a nuclear war, let it begin right here on our soil."

As an American I know it is tragic proof, bitter proof, of how little interest our government has in exploring disarmament when it writes off the Soviet initiative so swiftly. In 1978 when WRL sent a team of us to demonstrate for disarmament in Red Square, the Soviet Peace Committee met with us the next day. Norma Becker, Chairwoman of WRL, spoke for us in asking the Soviets to take unilateral action, pointing out that the West, because of its economic commitment to the arms race, would be unlikely to take the first step. Now there is a long cable on my desk from the Soviet Peace Committee which says, in effect, "OK—we got our military to move—now you get yours to move."

David McReynolds is on WRL National Staff.

WRL STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The War Resisters League affirms that war is a crime against humanity. We therefore are determined not to support any kind of war, international or civil, and to strive nonviolently for the removal of all the causes of war.

☐ I support this statement and wish to enroll as a member of the **War Resisters League.**

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339 Lafayette Street
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- **1 Handbook,** to let you know where you stand.

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